DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 463 CE 023 954

AUTHOR Ellis, Mary L.
TITLE Vocational Education: The Future Is Now. Occasional Paper No. 37.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
PUB DATE Jun 78
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (Columbus, OH, June 1978).
AVAILABLE FROM National Center Publications, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210 ($1.90).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Economic Change; *Educational Change; *Educational Planning; Futures (of Society); *Social Change; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Planning for the future of vocational education should center around both external and internal perspectives. Planning for change should be based on the implications of the broadest societal issues as they evolve over the coming years. Accordingly, vocational programs need to be carefully reviewed to make certain students are being prepared to look beyond the entry level and to understand how skills and experiences on one level may later apply to another level or occupation. The profession needs to organize programs, institutions, agencies, and individuals to respond to the changes as they occur. If we accept projections of the age, sex, and racial composition of the work force, it probably means a transition to a new organization for the delivery of vocational education. Perhaps the profession needs one or more of its members to become vocational futurists--constantly challenging the planning of vocational education in the context of major social, economic, and political change. More emphasis should be placed on research and development toward retooling vocational education. The Department of Labor youth employment initiative may be the first of these challenges. (Twenty-one questions and answers from the audience of research and development personnel are appended.) (MEK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED182463

Occasional Paper No. 37

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE FUTURE IS NOW

by

Mary Ellis

President, Ellis Associates, Inc.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

June 1978

CE 023 934

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joel Magisos

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE NATIONAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

PREFACE

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education is indebted to Dr. Mary Ellis for her lecture entitled "Vocational Education: The Future is Now."

Dr. Ellis conveys three basic points in planning for the future of vocational education. First, it should begin from a perspective outside, as well as inside, vocational education. Second, the only thing we can safely plan for is change. Third, vocational educators must seek implications of the very broadest societal issues as they evolve over the coming years.

Additionally, Dr. Ellis offers recommendations for the future as perceived through these three notions.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University, Dr. Ellis received an Ed.D. in higher education, an M.S. in business education and technical education, and a B.S. in business education and administration.

She has served in many professional positions such as: Director, Technical Education Research Centers, Washington, D.C.; Director, Field Services, American Vocational Association; and Regional Field Coordinator, Manpower Development and Training Program, Division of Vocational and Technical Education, U.S. Office of Education.

In addition, Dr. Ellis was chosen Vocational Educator of the Year by the Maryland Vocational Association in 1974; President of the American Vocational Association in 1974-75; and President of the American Technical Education Association in 1974-75.

On behalf of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and the Ohio State University, I take pleasure in presenting Dr. Mary Ellis and her lecture, "Vocational Education: The Future is Now."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE FUTURE IS NOW

Those who lived in the agricultural society could not have foreseen the changes that would be wrought during the industrial era. Those of us who have grown up in the industrial era are in somewhat the same position when it comes to projecting changes that the post-industrial era will bring. Even though we may think of ourselves as relatively sophisticated futurists, we must acknowledge that the existence of "unknown unknowns" prevents us from looking very far down the road with much certainty.

We have all heard and used the phrase "planning for the future." Planning for the future implies that something about the future is known. It also implies that we know what we want to do with, or about, the future. If that weren't the case, how could we plan for it?

In fact, we do not—indeed, cannot—know all the future holds for us as individuals, families, or as a society. Will we be living in a utopian environment in which our greatest concerns are the maximization of human potential and the allocation of our resources to enrich the quality of life? Or will we be struggling on some lower level of the hierarchy of human needs, competing among ourselves as individuals, families, and nations, for resources for survival? The answer probably lies somewhere in between. But where in between? All we can know is how we would like the future to look. All we can do is try to make it look the way we would like.

You are probably ready for me to stop spouting generalities about the future and start discussing specifics about the future of vocational education. I ask you to indulge me a bit longer, for I am not quite ready to put on my vocational education hat. In fact, one point I would like to make is that all too often, when we confront the question of the future of vocational education, we put on our vocational education hats too soon. All too often, we approach our analyses of the future of vocational education from within our own ranks exclusively. Our perspective is on the inside looking out, rather than on the outside looking in at vocational education. This gives us a limited perspective on where we are, the direction in which we are heading, and what we are heading into.

As I have said, we cannot know what the future holds for us; we can only know how we would like the future to look. But while we cannot know the future, there is one thing we do know about the future. You have all heard this before—the only thing certain is change. And as we move into an era of 'knowledge economy" it is quite likely that changes in our society will continue at an ever accelerated rate. The expansion of technological development in this country and around the globe will probably intensify the change process.

Given that change is certain, then planning for the future is planning for change. Given this, there is a tendency to ask: What will change? How will it change? How will I be affected? How will the next generation be affected? Attempts to answer these questions are, at best, speculation. There are too many variables involved, too many "unknown unknowns." Consider the following:

- Will the arms race continue? Will it carry over into a space race in which we find it necessary to invest our resources in offensive and defensive satellites and other space vehicles?

- Will we experience a "no-growth" society, characterized by zero population growth and zero economic growth? Will we make the transition to such a society without severe social and economic trauma?

- Will our development of energy sources keep abreast of our need for energy? If it does not, will we adjust as a nation to life styles dictated by energy scarcity?

- Will the family (two or more persons to a household) continue to serve as the predominant unit within our social structure? Will the family assume more or less social responsibility in the face of broad societal changes?

- Will our population shift away from the Northeast Corridor to the Sun Belt? Will our population continue to shift away from the cities to the surburban rings? If growth in certain regional and urban areas continues to decline, how will vital public services be financed?

- Will national policies be established which enhance or impede the development of educational programs to prepare our citizens to function effectively in the world of work, and in society in general?

- Will programs such as those funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) be institutionalized?

These questions address changes that may affect our society within the next ten, twenty, or fifty years. They are offered here as rhetorical questions. No answers are solicited, for there can be no certain answers. What there can be, and must be, however, is awareness and concern on the part of all persons dedicated to the future viability of all our social institutions. I hope that all vocational educators number themselves in this group. And I trust that no vocational educator would ask why rhetorical questions such as mine are being raised. I hope it is clear that the answers that are finally given to these and thousands of other questions which pertain to the future of our society will contain within them the keys to the future of vocational education.

Thus far, I have conveyed three basic points. First, planning for the future of vocational education should begin from a perspective outside, as well as inside, vocational education. Second, the only thing we can safely plan for is change. Third, vocational educators must not fail to seek out the implications of the very broadest societal issues as they evolve over the coming year.

What cues can we take from these three points to help us decide how we should look at the future? When we plan from within vocational education, we tend to assume that we are needed, that we have been doing an important job, and that our task for the future is to figure out how to do the same or similar job better. This tendency, by the way, is not the exclusive domain of vocational education. We also tend to view the current legislation as the "bottom line" in terms of direction for spending our money and our energy; we tend to feel that if our planning is responsive to the legislative mandates, everything will turn out all right.

What happens, if, as planners and as futurists, we step outside vocational education? What if we are not predisposed to the design of vocational education as it exists today? What if we objectively examine the flow of students through the education system and out into the world—not just of work, but of life? What if we examine the need for vocational skills for all segments of the population, including those persons who have been out of school for many years, and those for whom

the structured school experience did not work? What if we observe that school enrollments are declining, and that the average age of our population is moving upward? What if we observe that the graduates of our public education system are experiencing, or facing the likelihood, of underemployment - the crunch that occurs when most jobs available to workers are below their level of job preparation? What if we observe that the number of women wanting and needing work is rapidly increasing, but that women are generally relegated to relatively few low-paying occupational fields in the labor force? What if we find studies that suggest that vocational education does not have much of an effect on the career development of students over the long run?

What then?

As planners not predisposed to the current design of vocational education programs and delivery systems is it likely that we would recommend that vocational education in its present form be continued or expanded? Would we view vocational education as the primary vehicle for vocational preparation for all of our citizens, or would we view it as something more limited in scope and in potential? Would we feel that other vehicles for vocational preparation were needed outside the traditional education system? Would it make sense to give employers and unions more responsibility and more support for vocational preparation? Would we feel that the vocational education legislation governing the programs allowed administrators and teachers to do everything they could to effectively prepare all citizens for their chosen fields? Would we feel that the legislation was adequate on the short-term and on the long-term as well?

What would we think?

If we were to step outside vocational education, examine it in the context of a total national system of education and work, and raise questions such as these, I don't know what we would think. But I do know that, when we stepped back into vocational education, when we put our vocational educator hats back on, we would probably have a different slant on the planning that is needed for vocational education. We would probably not feel as comfortable in planning simply for new variations on some of our same old themes. We would probably not feel as comfortable, if we ever did, with the rigidity of the system within which we now operate.

Let us move now from the notion of changing our planning to the notion of planning for change, our second major point of discussion. Knowing that societal changes are likely, and not knowing the "what, where, when, how, or why" of those changes, what can we do today? "Drop back and punt" is not an acceptable answer. One acceptable answer, I think, is that we plan now to educate for change. Consistent with our mission, this means that we plan now to educate for vocational change.

Let's look at our mandate. In essence, we are in the public service to provide all persons access to high quality vocational education which is both responsive and responsible: responsive in terms of the needs, interests, and abilities of those seeking vocational education, and responsible in terms of the needs and the opportunities that exist in our economy. We are, or should be, constantly striving to balance responsiveness and responsibility for each individual vocational student—that is, to balance what the student wants to do and what he/she is able to do against the apparent realities of the labor market.

Most vocational educators and most vocational education programs are pretty well equipped to realize this basic mandate today. Granted, there is always room for improvement.

But what happens when the concept of change is introduced? What happens when the mandate is to be responsive in terms of the changing needs, interests, and abilities of students, and responsible in terms of the changing needs and opportunities in the labor market? What happens, I think, is we continue to do some things that we have always done in vocational education, but we make a concerted effort within our field to do these things much better than we have in the past. We have sought, for example, not only to teach entry level skills but to prepare students for vocational development that extends beyond the entry level job or the entry step on their career ladders. We have understood that this was what set vocational education apart from other types of short-term training programs. At this time, we must ensure that this is more than just rhetoric. At this time, we must take a careful look at the design of our programs, to ensure that they are capable of preparing our students to look beyond the entry level and to understand how skills and experience at one level and in one occupation may later be applied at another level and in another occupation. We must ensure that our students have a good picture of the cluster of occupations they will be entering, and that they understand why it is important for them to have this picture. We must ensure that our students enter their chosen vocations with an awareness that what looks good today may not necessarily look good tomorrow—or may not even exist tomorrow. We must ensure that our students know that our economy is likely to change, and that they are likely to change.

Let's look at another example.

We have always sought to present vocational education programs which accurately reflect the labor market. Indeed, we have been required by legislation to do this. We have sought to prepare students for jobs that existed at the time, and jobs that were likely to exist over the years. Again, I'm optimistic, and I like to think that we have done a pretty good job of this, given the limitations of labor market data and the state-of-the-art of our projection capability. Most of us have relied on other people's data, and have wrestled with it or massaged it to get it to tell us what we wanted to know. Over the years we have pushed for more and better data, and we are now seeing new and improved management information systems.

To be sure, being responsible in the eyes of the employment community involves our preparing students for the jobs that must be filled now and in the foreseeable future. Realizing our responsibility to both our students and their employers requires that we continue to push—and push hard—for the best possible labor market information that can be developed. If we anticipate that changes in the economy and the labor market are going to be occurring with greater frequency, then we should be willing to invest some of our funds in the improvement of our ability to monitor the changes and plan accordingly. We should also be willing to invest some of our time in efforts to convince other agencies and organizations that they, too, should improve their ability to monitor the economy and the labor market.

But this is not enough.

Earlier, I went to great length to convey the notion that we simply cannot look very far into the future with much certainty. I return to this now as a reminder that, while we must surely pay very close attention to the present-day indicators of changes that may affect the vocational preparation of our students, we cannot rely on this as our sole means of planning to meet our future responsibilities to the employment community, and ultimately, to the society. I believe that meeting these responsibilities will involve two things.

The first we have already addressed: educating for vocational change. If we do everything we can to help our students develop flexibility, adaptability, and mobility, we will be helping them, to be sure. But we will also be helping their employers by providing a work force that may be

acceptant of changes in jobs and organizations when they do occur, and able to function effectively in the new jobs and organizations with relatively little reorientation or retraining. By educating for vocational change, we can minimize the costs, both human and financial, that are generally associated with change.

The second thing we can do is organize for vocational change. This means that, in anticipation of more frequent changes in the economy and the labor market, we can plan now to organize our programs, institutions, and agencies—indeed, to organize ourselves—to respond to the changes that will occur. Again, we cannot know what vocational fields will be affected, or how they will be affected, but we can put a few present-day indicators together to get a general direction for change affecting vocational education.

If we are willing to assume that population growth will continue to slow, that the average age of our population will continue to rise, that a broader cross-section of our population (including more women and minorities) will be present in the labor force, that people will live longer and work longer, and that the structure and content of occupations in our economy will change more frequently in the years to come, then we can begin now to plan to make the transition to a new organization for the delivery of vocational education. If we accept these projections of the future, we can begin now to plan for a system of vocational education in which service to adults plays a much larger role, and service to younger students may play a somewhat smaller role (in terms of numbers of students to be served, not importance of service).

Regardless of how the youth-adult proportions finally break down for vocational education, we can begin now to plan for a vocational education delivery system that is less centralized than it is today, and less attached to traditional school buildings and hours, and yes, even teachers. As the numbers of adult workers needing retraining and upgrading increase in size, the desire of employers to seek on-site vocational training, and to arrange for the necessary facilities and equipment, may increase as well. As greater numbers of jobs change in structure and content, the vocational teacher may spend as much time analyzing the changes and translating them into curricula as she or he spends in actual instruction or laboratory or shop work. We may evolve a vocational instructor/analyst, a vocational educator who provides guidance to business and industry leaders and workers as well, a vocational educator who merges education and work on a day-to-day basis.

Before I drift too far into speculation about the future organization of vocational education, let's return to the point. Educating our students for change and organizing ourselves for change seems to me to be appropriate and necessary at this time. Both education for change and organization for change are processes, not events, and as such should be an integral part of vocational education. After all, when does future change begin to take place? (We have a football coach in Washington who constantly reminds us that "the future is now." Even though we lose too many football games in Washington, I think he's right about the future.)

Let us move now to the third major point of my presentation: Vocational educators must not fail to seek out the implications of the very broadest societal issues as they evolve over the coming years. I have offered examples of the kinds of changes that the future may—I repeat, *may*—hold for all of us. The point is that, even though we cannot know what is going to happen or how it is going to affect vocational education, we must always be on watch. And since we do not know exactly what we are watching for, I would like to suggest that we must watch for everything, and that we pose the same question for every major development and every projection that is made: How does this affect vocational education?

I am fully aware that most of us suffer from information overload. Even in our own fields of specialization, we are exposed on a daily basis to more information than we have time to review, much less absorb. For this reason, there is a tendency to screen everything we see and hear in terms of our immediate professional needs and interests. Rather than expanding our scope of knowledge and interest, the deluge of information forces us to be more selective in what we choose to read and listen to. The fact that most of our jobs have expanded and thus consume more of our time certainly contributes to the tendency to narrow our range of topical interests.

What I am suggesting today is that we must somehow reverse this situation; we must somehow make the time to broaden our coverage of the social, economic, technical, and political developments on this planet; we must condition ourselves to approach all of these developments with our question in mind: How does this affect vocational education?

Here is a simple example—one that came up in a recent conversation—of how vocational education can play a role in resolving an emerging social issue. Over the past several years we have seen consumer protection organizations and agencies proliferate in response to our collective recognition of the fact that, very often, our products and services are not everything they could be, and are often not what they purport to be. We have reached a point at which "caveat emptor" no longer seems to be adequate, and we are wanting to shift more of the burden of delivering what is promised back to the people making the promises. The existence of consumer protection organizations is a reflection of our distrust of our purveyors of goods and services.

Have we in vocational education recognized that we have a potentially significant role to play in restoring confidence in the goods and services available to consumers in this country? Have we taken the necessary steps to alert our students to the fact that, as producers and sellers of goods and services, they have the capability and the responsibility to minimize consumer problems and ultimately improve the quality of life for all consumers they affect? Have we couched our vocational education programs in these societal terms? If we haven't, I think we have missed an opportunity to do something of value for our students, something of value for ourselves, as vocational educators, and something of value for our society.

The emergence of consumer protection is but one example of a development carrying implications for the future of vocational education. When one contemplates such issues as food consumption, energy consumption, impact of technology on health, manufacturing, and communication, inflation, flexitime and leisure time, it is not difficult to envision ways in which future vocational education may be shaped by developments occurring in these areas.

I assume that most of you are aware that Mel Barlow serves as the American Vocational Association historian. It is good that our past is being documented, and as is expected of all good students, I think we should read our history and learn from it. My question is this: If it is desirable to have a vocational education historian, is it not desirable to have a vocational education futurist as well? Perhaps we don't need a futurist in the strict sense, but we do need someone, or someones, to constantly challenge us to plan vocational education in the context of major social, economic, political, and technological change.

In conclusion, let me enumerate a few thoughts for consideration. In a speech I read recently, the Chairperson of the Board of General Motors Company explained that GM would spend $15 billion over a six-year period to retool the production of cars that are more efficient and more responsive to customers' wants. The notion that a significant percentage of income must be spent on research and development for producing better products is well accepted in private industry. Why hasn't this notion carried over to the "people programs" in the public sector, and why hasn't it carried over to vocational education in particular?

Last year, over $5 billion (federal, state, and local dollars) were invested in federally assisted vocational education programs for over 17.5 million students. Yet, the amount of funds we spend for research and development for retooling for better materials and programs is minute in comparison to this total investment. I am pleased that the Congress had the wisdom to retain provisions for research in the new vocational education legislation. And I have high hopes for the new National Center, if it is funded adequately and given enough flexibility in development of research programs, to do what is needed, when it is needed, and for as long as is needed. I see this as a first step in recognizing that what we need in vocational education is programmatic research and not project research. And along with programmatic research, I hope that the Congress and the Administration will at some point recognize the absolute necessity of funding efforts for dissemination and utilization of research findings.

A couple of years ago, Ellis Associates was called upon to produce "A Report to the Nation on Vocational Education," a summarization of progress in vocational education over a four-year period. The difficulty we encountered in preparing this report was one I suspect many of you have had over the years: the absence of qualitative data on the performance of our programs. For whatever reasons, it has taken so much of our effort to come up with quantitative data that we simply haven't gotten around to developing the qualitative data that we need to tell us what is truly being accomplished for our students, our economy, and our society. We have been bemoaning our inability to portray the qualitative aspects of vocational education for some time, and I am now wondering whether vocational education, or any institution or program, will have much of a future at all if we talk only in terms of numbers served.

Implicit in what I have discussed today is the notion that vocational educators, to plan effectively, must understand the totality of the education/training/work environment in which vocational education exists. In light of the new Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, it is abundantly clear that, in terms of our needing to understand the totality of our environment, the future is definitely now. As you know, the history of vocational education's relationship with DOL's employment and training programs is not unscarred. But this does not suggest that it has not been unrewarding. Both vocational educators and employment and training personnel have developed a better understanding of one another's strengths and weaknesses over the past several years. This new DOL youth employment initiative should be looked upon as a "whole new ball game" for vocational education, an opportunity to demonstrate a combination of flexibility and effectiveness that we like to believe we possess.

Finally, it is appropriate to note that many of the organizational problems that vocational education and employment and training programs have faced over the years, and many of the unemployment and underemployment problems that underly the very existence of these programs, could probably be resolved within the context of a comprehensive and enlightened education/training/work policy in these United States. Unemployment problems and the broader social problems which attend them are real and are serious to be sure, and no one questions the need for an effective response to these problems. But what has evolved over the years, I'm afraid, is a patchwork of programs and regulations, not a cohesive, consistent attack on problems.

I hope that our efforts to work with the employment and training programs are beneficial to the millions of youth and adults who need employment experience. But beyond this, I hope that our new liaisons with the employment and training community will provide us an opportunity to work together, and push together, for the national education/training/work policy that this country needs so badly.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: Assuming we have good leaders, can we expect to come up with a central philosophy across all states?

I believe it is possible to identify those fundamental areas in which we can all agree and subscribe to. We simply have not taken the time to do so. My real concern now is that we have too much fragmentation with the field of vocational education. This is due, in large part, because our philosophical basis is evolving—thus, we need a reexamination of our philosophical basis to assure that decisions we make are based on a sound philosophical base. I wholeheartedly support vigorous and energetic debates among ourselves and with others outside the field given the premise that the debates lead to logical and helpful conclusions with respect to basic issues confronting vocational education. There are many areas in which we need serious examination and review, and it's time we got on with the business of addressing some of those issues now.

Question: Some vocational educators are saying we can't subscribe to the new youth bill and to CETA because they advocate pure skill training and not vocational education. Can you comment?

We must be responsive to the youth bill and to the CETA legislation or we will be out of the ball game. As you know, the drive by the Department of Labor is to get people off the welfare rolls and into some kind of private or publicly supported work or training. Little emphasis has been placed on training CETA participants, and the existing training tends to be on a short-term basis. Of course we need to differentiate between what we are working toward in terms of broader goals in vocational education as opposed to short-term skill training provided under the provisions of the CETA legislation. This does not mean that we do not have a major contribution to make to the goals of the youth bill or the CETA program; it simply means that vocational educators need to clearly specify the kinds of services and programs offered and how these may fit into the entire employment and training effort in this country. We need to determine what our role is in the context of the total employment and training push and to make it known to elected and appointed officials at all levels.

Question: Didn't USOE—not vocational educators—turn down Manpower?

We have an interesting situation in Washington. In the last twenty-two years, we have had almost as many Commissioners of Education. One year we have a Commissioner who comes from higher education and the next year a Commissioner who comes from secondary education—at least on the surface that's the way it appears. One of the serious problems with the high turnover in the Commissioner's position is that little time is afforded to "get up to speed" on issues and problems dealing with employment and training, including problems confronting vocational education. No, the USOE didn't turn down manpower—the agency simply didn't lobby vigorously for the program as did its counterparts in the Department of Labor.

Question: What are the most damaging "fights" among vocational educators?

Let me give you one example in which we may have won the battle but lost the war. In development of the recent legislation, serious differences surfaced concerning questions in the home economics area. Those questions should have been resolved before the home economists spoke to the issues with members of Congress and congressional staff. They were not. Differences were aired before consequences were thought through. As a result, we came close to losing the home economics provision in the amendments of 1976. The initial battle was won, but there are serious rumors that the administration may not request funds for home economics under the provisions of the 1976 amendments; or, if funds are requested, they will be at a reduced level.

Within the profession itself, we tend to represent fields of services as opposed to representing vocational education across the board. So we have a built-in dichotomy in terms of looking at the whole of vocational education as opposed to looking at the parts.

Question: What kind of impact will the marked drop in enrollment that is projected at the secondary level have on vocational education? Why didn't the current bill fill the needs of the older Americans?

As long as vocational programs meet the interests and needs of students, respond to the needs of employers, relate school to the real world of work, and are supported by the public in general, I don't see a marked drop in the projected enrollment of vocational education at the secondary level. When the programs do not meet these expectations, do not prepare students for employment, or do not provide the kinds of theory, related skills, and knowledge so necessary to function in this complex society, I suspect they will decline.

As to the 1976 amendments addressing the needs of the older Americans, there simply was not a group lobbying to accommodate the needs of older citizens. As our average age in this country continues to climb, I suspect we will have persons addressing the needs of older adults.

Question: Vocational education traditionally had the definition of providing skill training for jobs that exist. Over the past fifty years, it seems to have moved away from that and now is dealing with social issues, etc. Will it ever move back to the philosophy of providing skill training for jobs that exist as opposed to the philosophy of providing something for everybody, including curing social ills?

You raise an interesting question. The Congress has been consistent in including in vocational education legislation the provision that programs should be offered to all those persons in all communities who need and could profit from such programs that are realistic in light of actual or anticipated gainful opportunities. In my opinion, the Congress has clearly viewed vocational education as a social program over the last fifteen years. As long as public funds are used to support the program, I think there is little doubt that the Congress will continue to view vocational education, at least in part, as a social program. Certainly the Congress and the general public has a right to expect that vocational programs will provide the theory, skills, and related knowledges for graduates to effectively function on the job. I don't see the two—providing skills and related knowledges, and dealing with social issues—as mutually exclusive. In the final analysis, we have to determine the role of vocational education in the context of the nation's social, economic, and political order.

Question: What might be the optimal interface between vocational education and career education?

The concept of career education, while it means different things to different people, is certainly supportive of both vocational education and general academic education. I see the career education concept as a viable one in that it acquaints young persons with the real world of work, and thus integrates what happens in the real world with what is learned in schools. I see vocational educators and career educators working hand-in-glove for the betterment of our educational programs and finally in providing realistic and useful learning experiences to young people.

Question: In terms of the parameters of vocational education, and with constraints of categorical aid, where are the boundaries? Should we go to noncategorical aid? Should we put them together?

As long as the Congress continues to support vocational education, I seriously doubt we will ever move solely to noncategorical aid. Take the problems of the handicapped and disadvantaged. As long as those problems exist I believe the Congress will continue to make special legislative provisions to assist such persons. In addition, the Congress can effectively set priorities using the categorical funding technique. My real concern is that federal legislation be written broadly enough to provide the states enough flexibility to respond to national issues and problems which surface within changing economic and social conditions. In the strictest sense, if the Congress ever decides to move away from noncategorical support for vocational education, it would pretty much result in general revenue sharing—otherwise, putting the money on the stump and running. I frankly doubt that will happen.

Question: Margaret Mead is alleged to have said that education has been committed to training people for jobs that don't exist. How do you feel about this?

Few of us were born with "silver spoons in our mouths." Thus, most of us will have to work the better part of our adult lives. To this end, people should be prepared to take their useful place in society based upon their vocational choice. I personally believe that there is a need to maintain a balance between those needs driven off labor force requirements and those driven by one's need or right to study any area of interest.

Question: What impact will the "back to basics" theory have for both career and vocational education?

I should think that would help us. In American education, we tend to go to one extreme or another before we reach any kind of middle ground. I think the "back to basics" movement should help us in the sense that our students would be better able to express themselves, be better able to compute various types of mathematical problems, and hopefully would be better able to accommodate theoretical concepts.

Question: You mentioned the need to examine philosophies, policies, and programs. Isn't that a giant, almost impossible task? How do we make this happen?

There is no question that examination of philosophy, policies, and programs is an enormous task. However, such tasks are necessary if we are to re-examine and reaffirm our mission in the context of a changing world of work. First, we need an in-depth examination of the philosophy of vocational education to assure that we are on sound footing in making decisions with respect to the overall program. Second, we need to examine policies to determine which policies enhance or impede the development of viable vocational programs. Third, we need to examine programs to assure that the right programs are being offered, that they do meet the needs of students as well as business and industry, and that the most current theories and techniques are being taught in any given program. To attack these issues and problems in a cohesive fashion will take all of us working together in a concerted effort regardless of our particular responsibilities.

Question: Would you comment on program evaluation?

I am pleased with the emphasis on program evaluation. As you know, a couple of years ago when we were writing the Report to the Nation on Vocational Education, one of our real problems was that we were working with aggregate numbers of people and of dollars. We have gross quantitative data but very little qualitative data that tell what happens as a result of our program. We have been given repeated mandates in terms of program evaluation to see where we are, and how we can improve our program. I don't view this as a threat. Many people do. I think we ought to be willing to work at how we can improve our programs, how we can modify, how we can adjust programs, and if we need to—terminate a program in vocational education. The prospects are exciting, and we have to look at a host of factors that heretofore we have ignored.

Question: In the accountability area, a point of comparison is the high unemployment rate. Should we restructure the rate? What can vocational education do? I sometimes don't see anything so wrong with a 7 percent unemployment rate.

I guess I wouldn't see anything wrong with the high percentage of unemployment if I wasn't one in that percentage. But with 7 million people unemployed, it is a severe drain on the economy one way or another. Some people argue we no longer have a work ethic, but I think we do in a sense that we continue to identify with our work. In terms of vocational education assisting in the war against unemployment, we certainly have a contribution to make. I am not suggesting that vocational education take on all the social concerns and issues in the country. But neither am I suggesting we ignore possibilities to make a contribution to reduce unemployment. I am sure that we can get involved in certificate programs more than we now do. I am not so sure that anything is sacred about closing our school doors at 4 p.m. or not running around the clock. We did very successfully during Work War II. In terms of women entering the labor force, they are working because of economic need. Over half of the labor force will soon be composed of women. That suggests to me, in context of the kinds of programs we design, that we ought to be sensitive in terms of preparing women to function in other than traditional women's programs.

Question: I'd like to talk about money priorities. What if students don't get trained at the secondary level? Do we want to go overboard and move the money out of secondary to postsecondary and then not contribute to the development of job training at the secondary level?

I am not proposing that. The states need flexibility to identify what needs to be done in terms of age groups, in terms of programs, and then go to work. My concern about the current legislation is that it is very prescriptive and leaves too little flexibility in terms of basic program needs and requirements.

Question: How do you view the future formation of the department of education and solidification in the hierarchy of USOE?

I, along with countless other people I am sure, have been called to the Executive Office of the White House and been asked for views on the possible formulation of a department of education, a department of training, or a department of human resources development. I think there are pros and cons to be considered. For example, I am sure you are aware that for the last ten to fifteen years, members of Congress have introduced a bill to create a department of education every year and nothing much happened. One of the positive things people would argue is that if we were pulled away from welfare and health, at least we could be on our own and could fight for our own programs. And education would have a spokesperson in the cabinet.

On the other hand, if you are on your own, you have to be able to defend what you are doing, why you're doing it, and how well you are doing it. That is another proposition. A task force currently is looking at whether or not a new department should be created. It has some serious problems. It has to look at programmatic concerns, i.e., the difference in programs within the agency. It has to look at philosophical concerns, i.e., the differences of philosophy which prevail, most particularly in HEW and in the Department of Labor. It has to look at political concerns as they relate to different committees which preside over different agencies. It has to look at practical concerns based on how realistic it is to assume or to adopt a department of education. Then we have the proposition in which, if the department of education is created, does it and should it have responsibility for training functions? Should there be a department of education and training or should there be a department of human resources development under which education and training is subsumed. There are many unknowns. There is a great deal of turfmanship that has to be taken care of in the development of new departments.

Question: Do you foresee a day when state planning in vocational education per USOE requirements becomes more than the habitual compliance activity?

I am convinced that in the 1976 Act, Congress intended that state planning be more than a ritual of compliance. I don't know if it can ever be that if administered with the current mode of thought. The Congress has a right to establish priorities which should be addressed. But beyond that I believe the states ought to have enough flexibility to design and implement program planning they need. I have contended for many, many years that to administer vocational education programs, a state director should only be required to submit a letter of intent that he/she intends to administer the money in keeping with the intent of the law. Apart from that, the states should design their own plan in keeping with the national priorities established by Congress. Then you might get a viable kind of planning. We have moved into an era in these United States in which the courts have pretty much intervened in terms of education. The courts are establishing educational policy so I can understand the compliance orientation. I don't appreciate it, but I can understand it.

Question: Are you saying that, even with new legislation, you don't expect state planning to improve that much?

No, I expect planning to improve but in terms of five-year plans that had to be submitted, states must comply with so many provisions that the plans have become a compliance document as opposed to a planning document. In our state, for example, we have the official five-year plan which was submitted to USOE. In addition, we have a popular version of the planning document which we use—it is an unofficial document but one which people can read and make some use of.

Question: Where do we stand on the trend for the judiciary of this country to administer vocational education?

I am afraid we are going to find ourselves in the position where the courts make unsound and unwarranted decisions for education versus people who are responsible for program administration. I am concerned about intent of legislation; the courts are concerned about the *letter* of the law. Have any of you ever had the fun of developing regulations for a federal law? If not, you just simply have not lived! The 1963 Vocational Education Act was enacted while I was employed by the federal government. In drafting regulations, we worked with eleven different attorneys over a period of eleven months. Those eleven attorneys looked at the law strictly from a legalistic aspect. Program personnel were looking from a programmatic aspect. It was an almost "ne'er the twain shall meet" proposition. About the time we would get one attorney to the point he understood what we were talking about with respect to programmatic issues he would be reassigned and we would inherit another attorney.

Question: With the new president of AVA, do you see things happening that will be beneficial to the field?

I hope so. I am sure you are aware that we have a new executive director of the AVA, Dr. Gene Bottoms. We have a new president, who is Dr. Gordon Swanson at the University of Minnesota. Both are dedicated, able people, as is the new AVA board. They are beginning to look at some broad and nagging issues. We have one problem with AVA in that the board has historically met only three times a year. To accommodate the kinds of issues emerging today and to conduct an in-depth examination of what kinds of positions the profession itself should adopt will no doubt require additional time.

Question: You mentioned restructuring of the board and raising dues in AVA. How can we promote membership? Are there other things we can do to revitalize the organization?

One of the things the members can do is to stay in tune with the issues so that when something comes up that is a concern to you professionally as a state, as a group, or as an individual, you can let your state association know. You can let the national association know. Secondly, volunteer to serve on committees. We have a situation in AVA where we have lots of committees but we don't have a great deal of finances to bring them to Washington when they are needed. This problem must be dealt with also. Figure out how to invest your time looking at different issues.

We've grown up in the last ten years in an era of instant gratification. Members want immediate feedback when they are investing in a professional organization. There may not be immediate feedback in terms of what the professional organization does for you. Services of the professional organization might not be identifiable at all. So we must have other ways to promote membership. For example, if you are a teacher educator, one of the things you do is spend some time talking about the role of professional associations and give students an opportunity to join the AVA. Secondly, you can identify people who have potential and are willing to work and encourage them to serve on local, state, and national committees. Thirdly, you could have an issues forum, if you want to call it that, in which you get together on a periodic basis and discuss major issues. Fourthly, you can begin to talk about the magnitude of what is before us and how we have to begin to invest not only our time but our resources in working with our associations.

Question: How serious is the pressure to make AVA more responsive to the personal welfare needs of teachers? If this is done, will we lose others, like administrators and educators?

There is a committee on personal welfare. There are people that are pushing and saying that AVA ought to be looking at personal welfare kinds of problems as opposed to professional kinds of problems. I don't know how serious it is going to be nor do I know how the board will look at it. It may be a prelude to collective bargaining, and I am not sure we are ready for that. I am not sure we want it.

The AVA is an interesting organization. It is the teachers who support the organization in terms of numbers now, but in terms of activity, in terms of the real work in committees, it is the administrators.